

VZCZCXRO5020
OO RUEHBW RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV RUEHSR
DE RUEHET #0734/01 1491352
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 281352Z MAY 08
FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1873
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFIASS/CDR USEUCOM ALT SHAPE BE PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHMFIASS/CDR USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0328
RHMFIASS/CDRUSANATO SHAPE BE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ATHENS 000734

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/22/2018

TAGS: PREL PGOV NATO UNSC IR MK GR

SUBJECT: TOUR D'HORIZON WITH FM BAKOYANNIS

REF: A. ATHENS 651

1B. ATHENS 678

Classified By: Ambassador Daniel V. Speckhard for 1.4 (b) and (d)

SUMMARY

¶1. (C) In a May 23 meeting with Ambassador Speckhard, FM Bakoyannis said she and PM Karamanlis had told Macedonian President Crvenkovski that Greece seeks to conclude the name negotiations quickly. Macedonia must choose an adjective for "Macedonia" that makes clear the country is part of a broader Macedonia, and the adjective must precede "Macedonia." The new name must also be used on all documents, passports, products, etc. She said Greece does not insist on a change in the constitutional name, but she did not see how the Greek view of the scope of application could be achieved without the new name being reflected in the constitution. The Ambassador pressed for rapid conclusion to the issue and for maximum flexibility from the Greeks.

¶2. (C) Bakoyannis suggested a new UNSCR is required to obtain "EU unity" on Kosovo, adding what is needed is a "reaffirmation of 1244." She had recently met SRS President Dacic in Athens and was pessimistic he would form a coalition with Tadic. The Ambassador raised the need for further sanctions in Iran; she agreed the international community needed to be "firm" with Iran, but did not appear fully briefed on the issue. She expressed grave disappointment with the NATO decision not to support the "NOBLE ARCHER" Aegean exercise, blaming the United States. The GOG is downplaying the issue for now, but will revisit it with the U.S. in the future. She expressed concern with the AKP case in Turkey, noting that it has complicated Greece's ability to make progress with Turkey. She noted that Greece's last offer on the Visa Waiver MOU was as far as Greece could go, and pledged to work to conclude the MOU quickly. She also laid out her priorities for the upcoming "Women in the Middle East" forum hosted by Greece. End Summary.

Macedonia Name

¶3. (C) Bakoyannis provided readout of her and PM Karamanlis' conversations with Macedonian President Crvenkovski on the margins of the May 21 SEECP Summit in Bulgaria:

-- Name: They told Crvenkovski that Greece would not impose a name; he could pick the adjective ("Gorno," "Upper," "North," etc., as long as the adjective made clear that the country in question is only a part of a broader "Macedonia," and the adjective precedes the noun. They told him that "Republic of Macedonia Skopje" will not work.

-- Referendum: Bakoyannis said they had not threatened or insisted that Greece would require a referendum if the Macedonians held one. They did tell Crvenkovski it was a bad move that would lead the Greek opposition to insist there should be a referendum on the enlargement decision, not the name. The Ambassador responded that Greece's approval would be the parliamentary ratification. Bakoyannis responded that it would be difficult to explain to the public that the Macedonians could let the public decide, while resisting similar arguments in Greece or elsewhere in Europe. She added she was worried about the pressure for referendums on enlargement in the EU context, and the impact of the furore referendums on Turkey-- Scope of Application: They told Crvenkovski the new name needs to be a name used on documents, passports, products, etc. The Ambassador pushed back, noting that requiring a change in the Macedonian Constitution would be a bridge too far. She responded that Greece does not insist on a constitutional change, but she added she did not see how it would be possible to have a name used for all international usage, including commercial, and not have it reflected in the Constitution.

-- Timing: They told Crvenkovski that they are serious in pressing ahead. At the same time, given the time it would take to form a government in Skopje after the Parliamentary elections, they were skeptical that there would be sufficient

ATHENS 00000734 002 OF 003

time to arrive at a solution before July 9th. The Ambassador urged her to press ahead.

-- PM Gruevski: Bakoyannis more generally noted that the GOG is worried about Gruevski; she said he is using old style Balkans rhetoric internally that is divisive (Macedonians versus Albanians), adding that the Bulgarians have similar concerns.

¶4. (C) Throughout the conversation, the Ambassador encouraged FM Bakoyannis to press ahead and be flexible in the negotiations. The timing is right to seize the opportunity after the elections to get this issue behind us.

Kosovo

¶15. (C) Bakoyannis affirmed that she had met with Kosovo FM Hyseni in Bulgaria. She alluded to "problems in the EU," and added that she believes a UN resolution is needed. A new UNSCR does not need to be detailed; a simple reaffirmation that 1244 is still the basis would be sufficient, and it would not need to address the current situation.

¶16. (C) The Ambassador pushed back that this seemed like it would create more problems than it would solve, and asked if it was not likely the Russians would veto. Bakoyannis responded that it depends on Serbian developments; Tadic needs to win the government formation battle. She thought Tadic could support a resolution limited to a reaffirmation that 1244 was still germane. The resolution could mean different things to different people. If Serbia did not have problems with the resolution, it could be possible to get Russians on board.

¶17. (C) The Ambassador expressed great skepticism. She responded that she knew this would not be easy, but unity in EU is desperately needed; she thought a new UN resolution was the only way to obtain this. Bakoyannis would not give any indication of Greece's timing on recognition, with the clear implication that it would depend on further developments within the EU.

Visit of Serbian Socialist Party Leader

¶18. (C) Bakoyannis said she had met with SRS President Dacic earlier on May 23 when he visited Athens at the invitation of leading opposition party PASOK President and Socialist International President George Papandreou. Bakoyannis said she does not think that the SRS will form a government with Tadic; their (unspecified) offer is too good from the nationalists. She encouraged Dacic to think of his party's future. In the next ten years the SRS' old constituency will be dying off; they need to reach younger people and will need a European focus to be able to do that. Bakoyannis was not optimistic that Dacic had been convinced.

Iran

¶19. (C) The Ambassador pressed Bakoyannis on the need to support a strengthening of sanctions against Iran. She was interested in rumors that the Ayatollahs were considering pushing out Ahmedinijad. She agreed the international community needed to be firm. She said she thought Greece could support a strengthening of economic sanctions, as long as such sanctions did not include oil. (Comment: Bakoyannis did not seem well briefed on this issue, and given clear indications - Reftel A - from the Greek MFA of skepticism about further sanctions, we caution against putting too much stock in Bakoyannis' initial reaction on this point. End Comment).

Aegean Exercise Cancellation

¶10. (C) Bakoyannis was very upset by NATO's decision not to support "NOBLE ARCHER" - Greece's planned exercise in the Aegean (Ref B). She said that Greece had worked for a long time to prepare this exercise, had followed the NATO procedures and rules, and SACEUR had supported it. Everyone

ATHENS 00000734 003 OF 003

always knew the Turks would object to the planned overflight of the island Agios Efstratios, and Turkish objections should not have come as a surprise to anyone.

¶11. (C) Bakoyannis said Greece believes the U.S. was responsible for pulling the plug on the exercise. She said that now is not the time to tackle this issue, and the GOG has tried to show restraint in its response, but we will need to pick this issue up again, as it is "very important" to Greece.

Turkey

¶12. (C) Bakoyannis said the GOG is very concerned with the internal situation in Turkey. The Greeks do not understand how it is possible potentially to outlaw the political party that has the support of the majority of the population or to blacklist over 70 of that party's most prominent politicians. She said Greece is very worried about the potential for future instability in Turkey. She added that this situation also means nothing substantial can be achieved on bilateral and regional issues until the question of the AKP's status is resolved.

Visa Waiver

¶13. (C) The Ambassador urged that the GOG be very flexible, responsive and restrained in the HSPD-6 negotiations that would take place May 28. She said that the GOG has worked very hard to resolve all the issues to be included in VWP. The last offer from Greece on the general VWP MOU is "the best we can do." She concluded that Greece will support efforts to conclude rapidly the MOU, but she asked that we recognize that Greece cannot get "too far out from the EU," adding Greece is not a "New Europe" country.

Conference on Women in the Middle East

¶14. (C) Bakoyannis briefly raised the "Women in the Middle East" Forum she will host as part of the Women Leader's Working Group. She said she wants results, and not just

talk. There she had tightened the focus of the forum on entrepreneurship) which gives women income, a sense of security, and empowerment.
SPECKHARD